

Kontakt Club introduces local culture

Building bonds of friendship made easy

Story and photos by
Cassandra Kardeke
221st Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

Living overseas can be rough. Americans must deal with being far away from home and family, a different language, a new culture, new people and the fear of getting lost. Stepping outside the military community can seem overwhelming.

Fortunately in many countries there is some type of partnership with the host nation to ease that transition. Here in Germany one such partnership is the Kontakt Club, a German-American friendship club. But German and American cultures aren't the only ones represented in the club.

Members hail from Italy, Ireland, France, Greece, Brazil and the Netherlands, and range in age from 10 years to the golden years. "We all learn from each other and find that in many ways we are alike, and at the same time we teach each other new things and get to learn more about our different cultures," said Evelyn Zierer, president of the Kontakt-Wiesbaden club.

Along with regular meetings twice a month, the club hosts a conversation class every other Wednesday – teaching both German and English to eagerly willing students. "At the moment we typically have more Germans attending than Americans, so it is pretty one-sided, but the program is growing," said Arleth, who began the class last year. Americans are always welcome to attend to learn and practice the German language, she said. The next scheduled conversation



Wiesbaden American Middle School students Nicholaus Bumpus, Casey Walton, Briana Oliver and Christie Rawlins accessorize their looks with confetti and streamers at the Kontakt Club New Year's celebration.

classes are Feb. 12 and 26.

On opposite Wednesdays, the club holds its "Stammtisch" or regular meeting, also at the Kleinfeldchen Restaurant at 7:30 p.m. "These meetings are generally a time where we can socialize with one another and get caught up or plan our club events," said Zierer. Meetings and conversation classes are held at the Kleinfeldchen Restaurant, located above the swimming pool, on Dotzheimer Strasse at 7:30 p.m. Although club activities are planned months in advance, such as bowling, miniature golf and dining out in new restaurants, "something always comes up at the last minute when we might find out about a trip or special event that is coming up, so we announce these during our regular meetings to see if others would like to come along," she said.

"Anyone can attend a meeting, conversation class or event. They don't have to be members of the club to join in on the fun," Zierer said. Membership fees are €20 for an individual and €30 for a family. However membership does have its privileges. "The price is lower for members on some of our special events such as Rhine Aflame and other trips," Zierer said. But she emphasized that all Kontakt events are open to anyone, member or not.

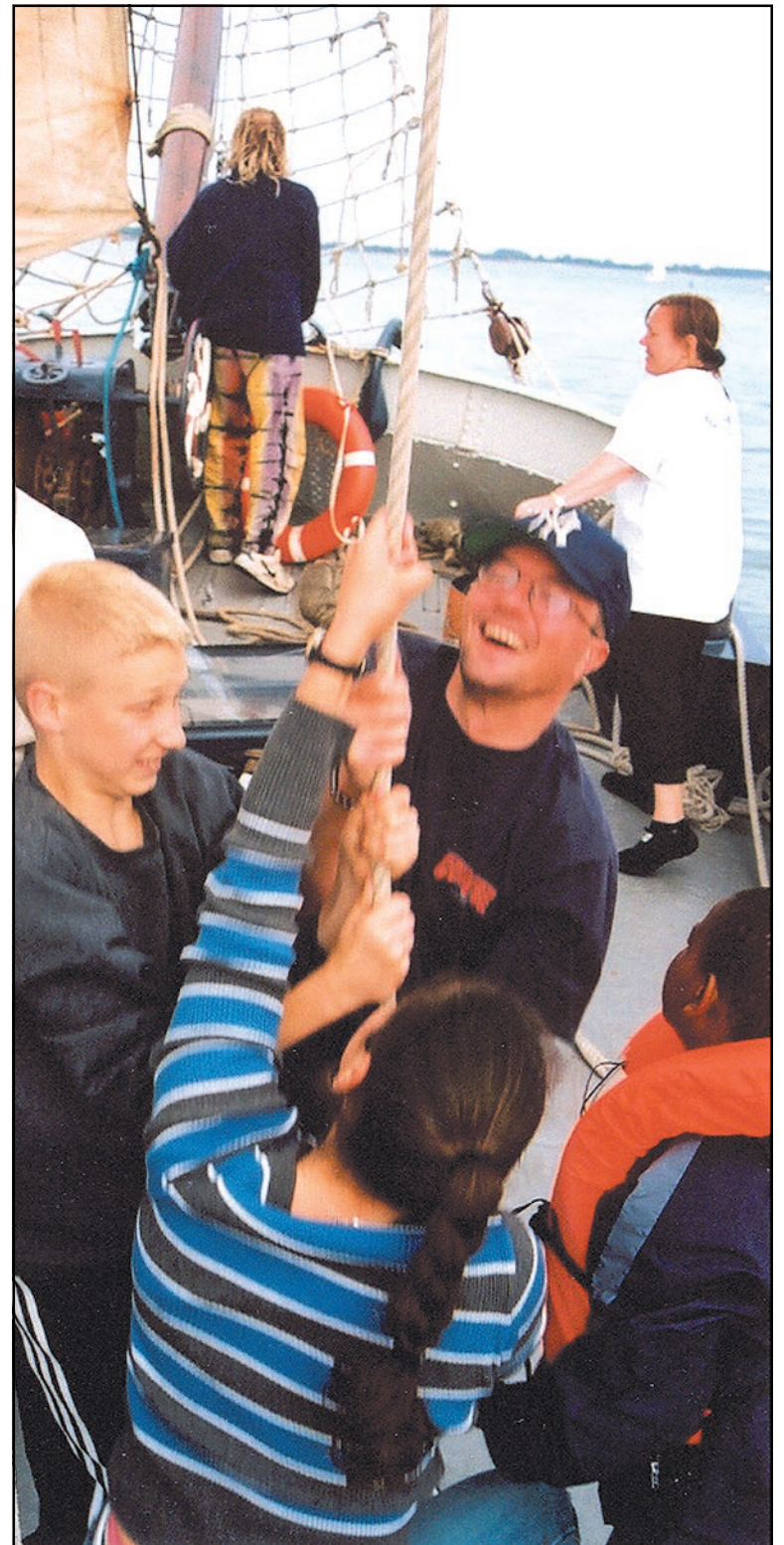
This year the club

will join with the Darmstadt Kontakt Club for several events, including a sailing trip in the North Sea off of Holland later this summer. "We had such a great turn out and a lot of fun last year that we are trying to double the number of people this year," said Eva Maldonado, a member of the Darmstadt club. Both clubs will join together for a pumpkin carving contest at an orphanage in the Black Forest as well as a canoe trip in the Black Forest.

Besides planning new trips and joining other Kontakt clubs, Zierer said the club will continue some of the more common events the club has been involved in, such as the Scavenger Hunt and Paper Chase, both of which take place throughout Wiesbaden. "If you don't know your way around Wiesbaden both of these will give you a chance to get really familiar with the area," said member Alexandra Schultes.

The most requested is the Robbery Exam, a weekend trip to the Spessart Forest, planned in the fall. Participants learn about the history and background of this area's most famous robbers and then practice skills needed to have been a successful robber from that time period. Skills such as using a sling shot, spearing wild boars, rolling a wagon wheel and even drinking ale are included in a hands-on test. By the end of the weekend, would-be robbers feast and declare the top thief of the weekend.

Kontakt is open to all American, German and other people residing or visiting Germany. For more information call civ (0178) 247-8638 or the 221st BSB Public Affairs Office at mil 337-5772, civ (0611) 705-5772.



"Heave-ho," yells the first mate as Wiesbaden and Darmstadt Kontakt members attempt to hoist one of the sails on an old-fashioned sailboat off the coast of Holland in the North Sea last fall. Hosted by the Darmstadt club, another sailing trip is being planned for the coming summer. Sign up early for this popular outing by calling your local Kontakt Club.



Salvatore Fardella takes charge of the grilling at the annual Kontakt membership barbecue in Wiesbaden last fall.



Alexandra Schultes poses as Santa Claus and hands out gifts during a Kontakt Christmas party.

221st BSB – Wiesbaden, Wackernheim, Dexheim

Youth activities

Whether school is in or out the fun never stops at Youth Services. Middle-school age children now have an after school pre-teen program available through Child and Youth Services. To register call mil 337-5383 or civ (0611) 380-7592. Other after school programs for youth are:

The **Keystone Club** meets Thursdays at 5 p.m. in Building 7878 and provides teens with opportunities for leadership development. The program enables teens in the community to express their concerns and needs through a Teen Council-type atmosphere. The **Torch Club** meets Mondays at 4 p.m. in Building 7878 and provides middle school students with similar opportunities for leadership development and social interaction.

The **Nike Swoosh Club** meets Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. in Building 7878. This teen-driven leadership group promotes physical fitness, interest in sports and the potential for athletics-related careers. Teen Nike Swoosh leaders are trained to coach sports, officiate, keep score and conduct a sports-related community service project, host Nike Games and assist staff with sports clinics and camps.

The **Youth Sponsorship Program** is designed to give youths insight into their new community, what facilities and programs are offered and points of interest in the surrounding areas.

The middle school and high school **Cooking Club** meets Tuesdays at 4 p.m. at the high school. The program is designed to promote healthy eating habits and nutritional awareness. Areas covered in this club are computer graphic design for menu preparation, techniques in research, using the Internet, sewing and eating.

The **Job Ready program** contains 120 competency-based sessions designed to build essential skills in finding success in the world of work.

The **Fine Arts Program** for both middle and high school students is designed to help young people express their creative natures. The middle school group meets on Tuesdays at 4 p.m. and the high school group meets Fridays at 4 p.m. This program also promotes the appreciation of such forms of fine art as sculpture, painting, opera, theater and handicrafts.

Monthly activities at YS include pool, pingpong, foosball tournaments, movie nights, dances and lock-ins. A monthly barbecue is held on the first Friday of every month for all registered members. Trips to other military communities in Germany, castles, amusement parks, swim parks, skate parks, zoos and other places around Europe are also featured. Participants must be registered in the Central Enrollment Registry. Call civ (0611) 380-7592 or stop by Central Enrollments at Army Community Service in Building 7790 in Hainerberg Housing to register.



Spelling champs to represent Wiesbaden in competition

By Cassandra Kardeke

221st Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

M-I-S-C-O-N-C-E-P-T-I-O-N — a word that will leave its mark in history for Wiesbaden American Middle School and an eighth-grade student who spelled it correctly during the school's Spelling Bee Jan. 27.

Chad M. Olenick, 14, went on to spell the championship word, "hydrant," after having out-spelled 10 other finalists in the school's first spelling bee in almost eight years. Olenick is not new to Spelling Bees. Having competed in school spelling bees since the fourth grade, he has plenty of experience. "I actually won

in the fifth grade and went on to place seventh for the county in South Carolina," he said.

"We really wouldn't have had a Spelling Bee if it weren't for the Parent Teacher Student Association that was recently formed for the school," said teacher and Spelling Bee coordinator, David Brown. Few teachers could remember the last time the school had a spelling bee. According to teacher Audrey Haines, the last one was held about eight years ago. "The Spelling Bee was the first organized event sponsored by the PTSA," said Renita Graves, PTSA president.

Approximately 50 students volunteered to compete and were given a written test the

week before the competition. "We just had too many students competing and needed to dwindle them down, otherwise the actual competition would have taken too long," Brown said. Eleven students advanced to the competition as finalists.

Olenick will move on to represent the school at the Department of Defense Dependents Schools Europe-wide Spelling Bee March 29 in Stuttgart along with Josh Williams, a fifth-grade student representing Aukamm Elementary School. The winner of that competition will move forward to attend the National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., in May.

\$50K up for grabs to enhance military community programs

Volunteer community organizations have until April 30 to enter the fourth annual Newman's Own Award for Military Community Excellence competition for a share of \$50,000 in grants.

The contest is co-sponsored by the Newman's Own Co., the Fisher House organization and the Military Times Media Group. First prize of a \$10,000 grant goes to the group with the most innovative plan to improve the quality of life for military families and their communities.

Contest judges allocate the remaining funds to other organizations based on programs that "capture the spirit of volunteerism," according to a Fisher House spokesman. Organizations should primarily be those with volunteers rather than paid professional staffs, such as parent/teacher organizations, student classes, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and spouses clubs that need financial aid for projects supporting the military community.

Newman's Own is the food company started by actor Paul Newman, that has do-

nated company profits, \$125 million since 1982, to charities and educational causes. Fisher House operates over 30 "homes away from home" near major military medical facilities worldwide to help family members tending to loved ones receiving treatment. The Military Times Media Group runs the military and Federal Times newspapers. For specific eligibility and entry rules, visit the Fisher House website at www.fisherhouse.org. (Contributed by the American Forces Press Service)

Army can aid in vandalism claims

By Capt. Keith Bracey

1st Armored Division Legal Center

If you have ever had your vehicle vandalized you know the feeling of returning to your car and finding it keyed, scratched or the windows broken and thinking, "How am I going to get this fixed?"

Private insurance is the most effective way to be compensated for vandalism. But it is up to the vehicle owner to ensure that the right kind of coverage is available in the insurance plan. Some policies do not cover vandalism and can make it difficult to receive compensation. The Army Claims Service may be able to offer an alternative solution, however, all methods of receiving compensation from private insurance must be exercised before the claims service can get involved. Keep in mind that the service is not a substitute for private insurance and many vandalism claims are not payable by the government.

For both private insurance and Army claims, compensation requires compliance with several procedures and requirements. Private insurance requirements vary from company to company, but the Army's requirements are detailed in Army Regulation 27-20 and Department of Army Pamphlet 27-162.

Waiting too long to report a vandalism incident or refusing to report it to any law enforcement agency can greatly reduce or

deny any compensation. Be sure to report a vandalism incident as soon as you notice the damage. Keep in mind that when reporting vandalism, the highest burden of proof is required by Army regulation. Make sure the vehicle is not moved until you have proven that vandalism occurred and details of the incident have been gathered.

One way to collect this information is to have either a police or a noninvolved third party perform a complete inspection of both the vehicle and location where the damage occurred. If this is not possible, take pictures or make a videotape of the damage and surrounding area. Make sure to include location, condition of other vehicles in the area, statements from witnesses, how the damage was noticed and any kind of identifying markings (such as words or designs) left at the scene.

The owner's statement alone is generally not enough to meet the burden of proof.

After all information is gathered get repair estimates for the damage. Prior to having any repairs

done, take pictures of the damage. This will assist both the private insurance company and the Army Claims Service. Keep copies of all estimates and receipts until the claim is finalized. Claims personnel will need to know about the condition of the car before the vandalism occurred, such as age and value as well as if any modifications were made since it's purchase (such as a new paint job).

Once all these requirements are met the claim can be submitted. After the claim is settled through the private insurance company report to the nearest Army Claims Office and pick up a claims packet. The claims personnel can assist with any other documents needed for the claim.

If you have questions or concerns regarding vandalism claims call the Claims Office at mil 337-4715 or civ (0611) 705-4715.



Weather hotline

Team 221st now has a 24-hour hotline for inclement weather. For current road conditions, closures and delays in the Wiesbaden, Dexheim and McCully communities call:

mil 337-7245
or
civ (0611) 705-7245

221st BSB – Wiesbaden, Wackernheim, Dexheim

Around town

Commissary hours changed

The Wiesbaden Commissary is now open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and on Sunday. Saturday hours are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Although the commissary is regularly closed on Mondays, it will be open on all federal holidays, including Presidents Day, Feb. 17, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Early bird hours are from 9-10 a.m. Tuesday through Friday.

APO open Saturdays

The Wiesbaden Army Post Office is now open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a nine-week test period.

Prayer breakfast

Deputy United States Army Europe Chaplain (Col.) Ronald Strong will be the guest speaker at the National Prayer Breakfast Feb. 11 at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield Dining Facility at 7 a.m. For more information call mil 337-1570 or civ (0611) 705-1570.

Sweetheart banquet

The Wiesbaden Protestant community hosts a Sweetheart Banquet Feb. 8 at 6 p.m. at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield Community Activities Center (Catering Center). Tickets are \$15 per couple or

\$7.50 per person and can be purchased at the Hainerberg Chapel and the Welcome Center, Building 1023W, Room 113. For details call mil 337-1570 or civ (0611) 705-1570.

Vegas in Dexheim

Check out the Body and Soul Vegas Review at the Rheinlander Club in Dexheim Feb. 5 at noon. This free Department of Defense show features Las Vegas-style singing and dancing, suitable for the entire family. For details call mil 334-5712.

Valentine's meal

The Dexheim Rheinlander Club hosts an early Valentine's Day dinner Feb. 13. All ladies receive a complimentary flower. For details call mil 334-5712.

Heritage luncheon

In honor of Black History Month the Dexheim Rheinlander Club hosts a luncheon Feb. 19 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Check out the Black History Month book display while there.

Tax Center open

The Wiesbaden Tax Assistance Center is open for business. No appointment is needed, just bring W-2s, last year's tax forms and identification. The TAC is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and is located at 31 Heer Strasse on Wiesbaden Army Airfield. Call mil 337-4725 or civ (0611) 705-4725.



Protect yourself from ID theft

By Spc. Rebecca Burt
V Corps Public Affairs Office

A December break-in at an Arizona health care corporation may seem like a distant problem to soldiers, family members and retirees in Europe, but that crime could affect Tricare beneficiaries here. At the very least it has focused greater attention on the growing problem of identity theft.

On Dec. 14 thieves broke into the Phoenix office of TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp. and stole computer equipment and files that contain private information on more than 550,000 people. As a result soldiers, family members and retirees who moved from Tricare's central U.S. region since 1999 will need to watch their credit reports a little more carefully.

The stolen data includes names, addresses, Social Security numbers and other information about clients — possibly even information about medical procedures, diagnostic codes for medical services, and locations and dates of services. While thousands of records were stolen, TriWest officials said fewer than 25 people may have also had personal credit card information compromised as a result of the theft.

Huge burden

"The misuse of this equipment and these files would pose a huge burden on our nation's military," said David McIntyre Jr., president and chief executive officer of TriWest. "While information has been compromised, we do not have any indication that anyone's personal information has been, or will be, misused."

Despite the disclaimers TriWest isn't taking any chances. The company sent out letters to all those who could be affected by theft, and has organized a website and a call center to provide information about the incident and how people can protect themselves from possible threats arising from it.

The company is also offering a \$100,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of those involved.

Though the TriWest system, which services 16 U.S. states, was the only one affected by this incident, Tricare has initiated a system-wide review of the physical and electronic security of its computer systems in an effort to ensure such a theft does not happen again.

Tricare Europe beneficiaries can rest easier knowing that their files are among the most secure, according to Troy Kitch,

Tricare Europe's director of public affairs and marketing.

"All of our servers are located in military facilities on secure posts, and we have a much higher level of security than a contractor's building in a downtown area would have," said Kitch. "However, with the Tricare directive in mind, we are carefully looking over our security to ensure that beneficiary information is absolutely secure."

Protecting people

Ensuring that such information is secure is an important part of protecting people from identity theft, one of the fastest-growing crimes in the United States.

A security breach such as the theft of the TriWest files is all that an opportunistic thief needs, said special agent William J. Stakes Jr., an economic crime staff officer with the European Special Investigation and Fraud Field Office of the 202nd Military Police Group.

"All it takes to have your identity stolen is opportunity," Stakes said. "A thief could stand behind you at an ATM to see your code and then steal your card, steal paperwork with your information from a personnel clerk or find a lost ID card."

"Two of the most popular means are 'dumpster diving' and stealing mail," he said.

Once a thief has someone's information he can open bank accounts, run up credit card debts, finance vehicles and even commit crimes, leaving all the evidence behind in someone else's name.

"These thieves can do a lot of damage before you even notice it," said Stakes. "It takes an average of 12.5 months before creditors and collection agencies start looking for you or you are refused credit for a nonpayment that isn't yours."

The key word in avoiding identity crime is prevention, said Stakes. "First and foremost: buy a shredder for your home and use it," said Stakes.

"Companies can help by ensuring that personal information — such as alpha, duty and alert rosters — are shredded when obsolete, and that Social Security numbers aren't publicly posted."

On top of keeping information out of "enemy" hands, individuals should order a personal credit report at least once a year and review it for problems.

"There are three credit bureaus — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion — that keep records of all the accounts held in a person's name," said Stakes.

"If something is abnormal, you can ask them to add a 'fraud alert' to warn companies that someone is using your name without permission."

Consumers are generally allowed one free credit report each year, and a free report any time their credit is refused.

Even when they are not free of charge, the fee to get a report is usually about \$8, said Stakes.

If an individual finds a problem on his or her credit report, he or she should research the problem to get as much information as possible, then report it to local police and the Federal Trade Commission, in addition to making "fraud alerts" with the three credit bureaus, said Stakes. He strongly recommended this line of action to everyone who has been a beneficiary of TriWest within the past few years.

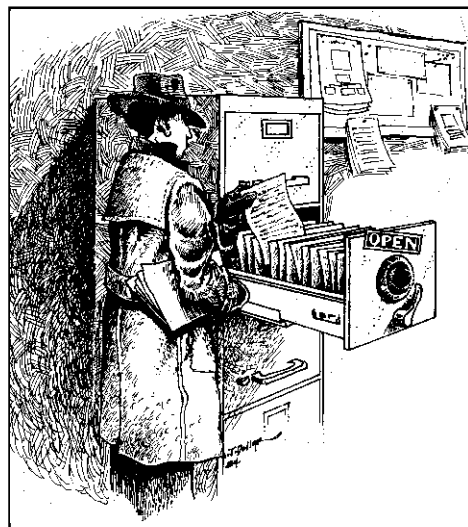
The TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp. provides services to military beneficiaries in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming and part of Texas.

Resources available for information

There are several resources available for soldiers, family members and retirees to get information and training, or to report identity crimes.

For more information on identity theft or to report identity crimes, CID and the Postal Inspection Service have set up a Fraud, Waste and Abuse and ID Theft Hotline. The service is available by calling mil 375-6669/7283, or by sending an email to esfso@ed.umuc.edu.

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission offers extensive information on consumer protection and identity crime. The FTC's identity theft website can be viewed on the Internet at www.consumer.gov/idtheft.



Community happenings

Adult babysitters needed

Earn extra money by providing child care in the home of a family. Sign up with the 221st BSB Central Enrollment Office located at Army Community Service, Building 7790 in Hainerberg Housing. The office offers information on available training opportunities and assists in obtaining referrals. For more information call mil 337-5383 or civ (0611) 705-5383.

Extended hours

Wiesbaden's Child and Youth Services Central Enrollment Office has extended its hours to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. The 221st Base Support Battalion Housing Office is now open Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon.

Soccer games

The Team 221st fifth annual Indoor Soccer Tournament will be held Feb. 8 at the McCully Sports and Fitness Center. Registration starts at 8 a.m. Cost is \$175 per team or \$200 per team with T-shirts. Sign up by Feb. 4. For more information call the Tony Bass Sports and Fitness Center at mil 337-5379/5943 or civ (0611) 705-5379/5943; Dexheim Sports and Fitness Center, mil 334-5746, civ 06133-69-746; or the McCully Sports and Fitness Center, mil 334-4737, civ 06132-508-737.



Racquetball Tournament

The Tony Bass Sports and Fitness Center hosts the fifth annual Sweetheart Racquetball Tournament Feb. 8. Registration starts at 8 a.m. and the competition begins at 10 a.m. Cost is \$15 with a T-shirt and \$10 without.

FREEky Fridays

FREEky Fridays at Team 221st Sports and Fitness Centers begin Feb. 7. Participate in any scheduled fitness class on Fridays for free if you are a U.S. military ID card holder. Participating facilities include Tony Bass, Dexheim and McCully Sports and Fitness Centers.

BOSS meeting

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers meets the first and third Thursday of each month at 2 p.m. in the 221st Base Support Battalion conference room.

Put on a mask

In celebration of Carnival and Fasching, wear a mask to any fitness class taught until 11 a.m. and participate in the class free.

Playhouse performance

The Amelia Earhart Playhouse presents "Wait Until Dark" Feb. 6-8, 13-15, 20-22, 27-28 and March 1. Tickets for this thriller can be purchased at Auto Haus Haese at Boelckestrass 38 in Mainz-Kastel, civ 06134-284-943; USO Store at Hainerberg Shopping Area, civ (0611) 73 1301; USO at Wiesbaden Army Airfield, mil 337-5806 or civ (0611) 705-5806; and at the Ameila Earhart Playhouse in Building 5312, Konrad-Adenauer Ring, mil 336-2473.

Resume class

Army Community Service offers resume classes every Thursday from 10 a.m. to noon in Building 7790, Room 22, in Hainerberg Housing and at 3 p.m. at the American Arms Hotel, Room 240. Evening classes are held at 6 p.m. the last Thursday of each month at the American Arms Hotel. For more information call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

Job Fair

Army Community Service sponsors a job fair March 20 from 2-5 p.m. at the ACS cafeteria in Building 7790 in Hainerberg Housing. For more information call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

Army Family Team Building

Wiesbaden/Dexheim Army Family Team Building offers training to spouses, civilians and family members including teens. Benefits of training include enhancing employment opportunities, promoting self-reliance, learning the ability to adapt to change with minimal stress and preparing families to face challenges of the military lifestyle. Classes will be held Feb. 11 and 18 from 9 a.m. to noon at Army Community Service in Hainerberg Housing. For more information call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

Volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed to deliver refreshments to troops on force protection duty. For more information call the USO at civ (0611) 721-010.

The Tony Bass Fitness Center needs volunteers for equipment

issue, athletic events and enforcing facility rules. Work schedules can be tailored to meet individual needs. For more information call mil 337-5943 or civ (0611) 705-5943.

The American Red Cross is looking for volunteers for the Healthy Baby Pregnancy class and at both the community mailrooms and the Army Post Office. For more information call mil 337-1760 or civ (0611) 705-1760.

Emergency care providers needed

Wiesbaden Army Community Service seeks emergency placement care providers. Free training and certification is offered. For more information call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

Loan Closet

Household items are available for loan to you and your family at no charge through Army Community Service's Loan Closet. Basic living items include pots, pans, dishes, cooking and eating utensils, irons and ironing boards, coffee makers, toasters and microwave ovens. Children's items include booster seats, strollers, cribs, car seats, highchairs and sure gates. Call mil 337-5754 or civ (0611) 705-5754 for

more information.

Spouses club luncheon

The Wiesbaden Community Spouses Club monthly luncheon and Fashion Show will be held Feb. 19 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Wiesbaden Catering Center. For reservations call civ (0611) 565 7401 or (0611) 505 5712.

Sponsorship training

The Army Community Service Relocation Readiness Program offers unit sponsorship. Although S-GATE is a primary training tool it does not include the entire scope of sponsorship. Upcoming training dates are Feb. 12, March 12, April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, Aug. 13, Sept. 10, Oct. 15, Nov. 12 and Dec. 10 from 2-4 p.m. at ACS. Units wishing to schedule a different day can call the relocation manager at mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034 for assistance.

WIC-Overseas

The Women, Infants and Children-Overseas program is available to eligible military families in Wiesbaden and Dexheim. Participants in the program receive healthy

foods, meal planning assistance and nutritional screenings for pregnant women and children. For more information call mil 338-7366, or stop by the WIC office in Building 7005 in Crestview Housing.

Newcomers tour

Army Community Service hosts a community orientation for soldiers, civilians and their family members the last Wednesday of every month. The tour begins at 9 a.m. at ACS and ends with lunch at the Wiesbaden Dining Facility. Reservations must be made by 1 p.m. the day before the tour. For more information call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034. A Newcomers Class is held the first and third Monday from 6-7:30 p.m. at the American Arms Hotel. Stop by the Information Center at the Arms Hotel for more information.

Anger management help

Social Work Services offers a four-week anger management group that teaches relaxation and self-calming skills that help you deal with adaptive responses when struggling with anger provoking situations. To sign up call mil 337-5297 or civ (0611) 705-5297.

New trainer hones Paladin crews

Story and photos by Ignacio
"Iggy" Rubalcava
222nd Base Support Battalion Public
Affairs Office

It's been in the works for more than seven years but it's finally here. It has a hefty price tag of approximately \$1.2 million but the savings it will garner make it well worth the cost. It's called the Fire Support Combined Arms Tactical Trainer and it provides Howitzer crews an opportunity to hone their tanker skills literally any time of the day or night.

Located at Baumholder's highest point inside the "Giant Golf Ball" building, the FSCATT simulator offers soldiers an opportunity to train up for their table qualifications. In fact, the simulator is already being integrated into the Division Artillery program and will become an integral part of table qualification for soldiers.

"We're already starting to develop standard operating procedures that will integrate this training device into our training system," said Sgt. 1st Class Steven M. Colman, Division Artillery master gunner.

"We use what we call Paladin tables, or artillery tables in the artillery community. They are different tables or gates that we have to go through before we can progress to the next level of training. This particular device here will be utilized extensively in what we call table six and table seven, which are non-firing tables to prepare the crews for table eight, which is the actual live fire," he said.

The simulator offers three different modes of operation that enables crews to train independently or with different components of the fire process chain.

"There are three different modes that we operate in," said Colman. There's the stand alone mode. That's where you've just got the actual howitzer crew itself, training, using the operator control station with the computers.

"We can do an interactive mode, which is when we involve fire direction control, the guys that tell us where to shoot the bullets.

"The third one, which is really great, is the closed loop mode. That's when you're involving the entire fire process chain from the forward observer calling for the fire, going through the fire direction center control guys, and then down to the gun line. So we get the entire sensor to shooter triad going all at one time. That's a huge benefit for us. We all get to train together without actually going to the field and shooting live rounds," he said.

There are obvious savings involved with integrating this new piece of equipment in to the training system. The people who pay the bills will be quite pleased because the biggest advantage and savings associated with the FSCATT will be the savings in training ammunition.

The advantage for the crews and commanders will be that they will be able to use the simulator anytime they wish.

"It's very labor intensive and also very expensive to take howitzers out into the field and do live fire missions. There are all kinds of expenses involved with that such as fuel, ammunition, logistics and more," said Colman.



Cpl. Michael Gittens, C Battery, 4-27th Field Artillery, relays data to crew members inside the Paladin trainer.

"With this equipment the soldiers can train, if they wanted to, literally 24-hours a day, seven days a week, which obviously we wouldn't, but it's a lot easier to get access to this thing and train with actual ammunition that we'd be using out in the field," said Colman.

The simulator comes very close to replicating the actual interior of a Paladin howitzer. Old A3 or A5 turrets make up the body of the simulator. "They (the contractors) took existing components from old coded out howitzers and refurbished them, cleaned them up, and that's what they've installed in this thing right here. It's got literally everything that you would find inside an actual paladin turret," said Colman.

"It's almost identical inside and it's a lot closer than some of the other simulators that I've seen in the Army system," he said.

"What we'll do is set this up so that one of the requirements to proceed to table eight will be to go through table seven and be certified on this weapon system here, on this trainer," said Colman.

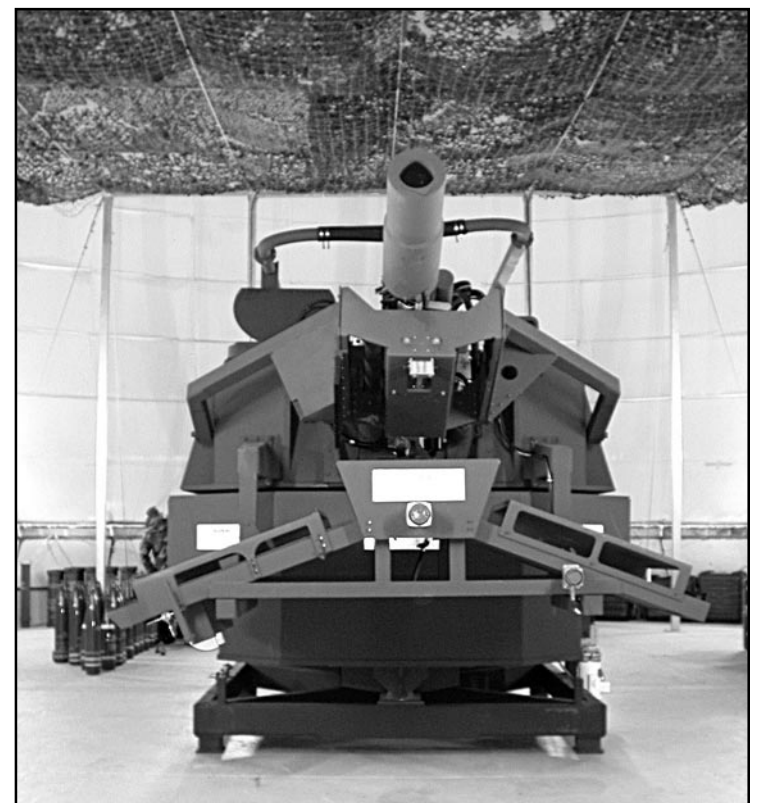
The simulator will also be integrated directly into the DIVARTY safety certification program. "We can do safety certification to ensure the crews can operate safely," said Colman.

The trainer is so realistic that it virtually



Training ammunition stands ready.

has no drawbacks or disadvantages, except perhaps that there are not enough of them. "I guess the biggest drawback is that because they're so darn expensive there's not that many of them," said Colman. "It'd be great if we had six of them to simulate an entire actual firing battery, but obviously that's cost prohibitive. We do consider ourselves lucky because there are only four of them in Europe. Each division that's over here has two of them, which is unique because the divisions stateside don't have their own, unless they're



At the base of the trainer, to the left and right of the tube, are the collection shoots where the training ammunition is expelled for reuse.

in the National Guard," said Colman.

"The main selling point is that this is going to be a great training tool, or I should say, a combat multiplier because of the fact that we can get some great training from it. It's going to make our crews that much better when they're out there actually having to do this for real," said Colman.



Photos by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

Melinda Ramirez assists Jammie Stegman prepare her annual tax return. Ramirez is one of five civilian and two special duty soldiers now providing free tax service to Baumholder residents.

Tax center open for business

The Baumholder Tax Center is open for business and five civilian and two special duty soldiers are ready to assist customers with tax preparation. Located in the 8th Finance building, hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays. Simple tax returns and 1040EZs can be prepared on a walk-in basis. More complex returns usually require an appointment.

The center itself has a new look. Employees from the 222nd Base Support Battalion Directorate of Public Works totally redid the bathrooms, the floors, the plumbing and the walls. They also added blinds, painted the sealing and the walls and re-carpeted the floor.

"I'd just like to emphasize that it is a free

service so there is no reason to go down and use one of the paid professionals in town. They can come in and get their federal and state income tax done. We "E" file (electronic filing) so that speeds up the process of getting refunds," said Capt. John Tracy, tax center officer.

To file taxes promptly, customers need the proper documentation. The documents most necessary in filing a tax return are the W-2 and 1099 forms. Tax payers should already have received these forms in the mail. It is important that tax payers have their W-2 and 1099 forms at the time they have their taxes prepared. For military personnel, they should come attached to the January LES and will be available on-line at "My Pay." Getting this documentation is the tax payer's responsibility

and the failure of employers or a financial institutions to send these documents will not be a defense to a late tax filing.

If tax payers have not received their W-2 forms by now they should contact their employer, for soldiers this means the local finance office. If the W-2s do not arrive by Feb. 15, contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.

The instructions for forms 1040, 1040A, and 1040EZ also list this information. The IRS will require the tax payer's employer's name, address, telephone number, and if known, the employer's federal identification number. The tax filer's address, telephone number, dates of employment and an estimate of total wages and withheld federal income taxes are also required.

The second type of documentation need

is the 1099 form. This form reports income from sources other than wages, salary, or tips.

Various 1099 forms include the 1099R, which report distributions from pensions, annuities, retirement, or profit sharing plans. Another example is the 1099INT, which reports interest. Most 1099 forms are not submitted with the tax return. The tax center can tell customers which 1099 forms must be filed with individual tax returns. Persons who receive a 1099 form after filing their taxes by reporting the income and take the credit for any income tax withheld by filing a 1040X amended tax return.

For more information about tax center operations, call the Legal Assistance Office at mil 485-6506 or the tax center at 485-8644.

Soldiers found guilty of assault, battery, AWOL

Results of courts-martial

Pvt. 2 Kenon T. Isabel, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-35th Armor, was found guilty by a general court-martial at Baumholder Jan. 13 on one count of assault consummated by a battery and one count of disobeying a lawful regulation. Isabel received a sentence of forfeiture of \$500 a month for five months, reduction to private and confinement for five months. Isabel is serving his sentence at the Mannheim Confinement Facility.

Pvt. 2 Jermany Ashton, Company C, 40th Engineer Battalion, was found guilty by a summary court-martial at Baumholder Jan. 14 on one count of being absent without leave and one count of missing movement. Ashton received a sentence of forfeiture of \$767, reduction to private and confinement for 30 days. Ashton is serving his sentence at the Mannheim Confinement Facility.

Pfc. Steven A. Jones, Company B, 40th Engineer Battalion, was found guilty by a summary court-martial at

Baumholder Jan. 14 of one count of being absent without leave. Jones received a sentence of forfeiture of \$767, reduction to private and confinement for 30 days. Jones is serving his sentence at the Mannheim Confinement Facility.

Spc. Kyle W. Ball, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-6th Infantry, was found guilty of one count of driving under the influence by a summary court-martial at Baumholder Jan. 15. Ball received a sentence of forfeiture of \$961 and reduction to private first class.

Soldier nets over nine grand in spree

Top trooper wins five-minute commissary haul

By Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava
222nd Base Support Battalion Public Affairs office

It took only five minutes for Spc. Justin Brown to relieve the commissary of \$9,381.97 and get away with it. That's the value of all the merchandise Brown and his fiancée Rebea Wodniczak were able to pack into 30 shopping carts during a shopping spree sponsored by the American Logistics Association, a consumer awareness group, who, on behalf of DECA ensures shoppers are fully informed of all the benefits the commissary has to offer.

The American Logistics Association awarded Brown with a five-minute shopping spree at the commissary for being selected as the Army's Soldier of the Year.

After a team of cashiers rang up Brown's shopping spree results on two registers and the "damage" was totaled, John Bendetson, a member of the American Logistics Association, broke out his checkbook so that Brown could write the checks and pay for the merchandise.

Brown, a test measurement and diagnostic equipment maintenance and support specialist assigned to Baumholder's 95th Maintenance Company, outdid the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year who only managed to rake in about \$7,000 during his shopping spree.

"The intention was to get all high dollar items that we could," said Brown. Non perishables were also on Brown's shopping list. "Razor blades for example, they're about \$13 for a pack of eight so now I've got enough that I don't have to go out and buy them for \$13 a pop," he said.

When it was all over, Brown surveyed the 30 shopping carts brimming with merchandise and in between heavy breaths he jokingly said, "I think it was very productive and destructive I guess, depending on your point of view. Five minutes was gone in a hurry but I guess this is where the hard work pays off. Your five minutes of fame."

Since Brown is a single soldier who lives in the barracks, the commissary is going to help him with the storage problem he incurred after his five minute dash through the commissary.

"Actually the commissary will keep it here for me, you

know, the frozen foods and everything. So when I do my shopping I don't need to bring any cash," he said.

Board experience

Like many, the 21-year-old Mundelein, Ill., native joined the Army about two and a half years ago for the college and education benefits. Brown is still looking forward to getting his education with just a slight change in plans.

"As I ... progressed, started doing some of the Soldier of the Year stuff, started seeing what the Army was about, I decided I'm probably going to make this my career. I'll get my degree through the military and we'll see what happens. My enlistment is for another two and a half years. I'm going to research what I can do in and out of the Army and go from there," said Brown.

Becoming the Army's Soldier of the Year almost didn't happen for Brown. His supervisor recommended that Brown participate in a board just to get the experience because eventually he would have to go before a board when it came time for a promotion to sergeant.

"The initial plan was just to get formal board experience but nobody else showed up to compete during the first board so I went to the next level just to get experience. Everyone kept telling me, 'Oh, the next level it's going to be really rough.' So I started really studying and ended up going higher and higher," he said.

The Army has had Soldier of the Year competitions at the battalion, brigade, division and major command level but this was the first Army wide competition and Brown is the first to wear the title of Soldier of the Year.



Photos by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

Spc. Jason Brown and his fiancée Rebea Wodniczak stock up on pizzas during his five minute shopping spree at the commissary. Photo left: Brown writes a check to cover the cost of his five-minute shopping binge. The American Logistics Association actually paid for the \$9,381.97 that Brown hauled away.



222nd BSB – Baumholder, Neubrücke, Strassburg

Force protection

The Baumholder military community will exercise its force protection capabilities Feb. 12 from 4 a.m. to 4 p.m. Persons may experience delays when entering the installation as a result of measures consistent with force protection levels Charlie and Delta. This is only an exercise and residents are asked to be patient and cooperative while Baumholder exercises its force protection procedures.

Deadline nears

The deadline for turning in volunteer forms to the Installation Volunteer Coordination Office is Feb. 28. All registration forms and volunteer hour sheets are needed to prepare for National Volunteer Week April 27 through May 3. For more information contact Army Community Services at mil 485-8188.

Automotive exams

The Automotive Service Exams will be given at Baumholder during May. Applicants for the exams must register at the education center before March 15 so that the tests may be ordered from the United States. Call Bill Badger at mil 485-8891 for more information.

Scholarships available

The Maj. Gen. James Ursano Scholarship Fund for Dependent Children of Soldiers is available for the upcoming college year. An application may be downloaded from

Post notes

www.aerhq.org through March 3. Call Bill Badger at mil 485-8491 for more information.

University rep visits

The University of Oklahoma field representative from Ramstein Air Base will visit the Baumholder Army Education Center on Feb. 5 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The representative may be reached daily at mil 480-6807.

ACS

Building 8746, mil 485-8188/6965

Attention newcomers

The Baumholder Army Community Services Newcomers' Orientation and Welcome will be held Feb. 17 – 19. This three-day course introduces newcomers to the Baumholder military community as well as Germany. Course time is 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. daily. Child care is available. Call ACS to sign up.

Volunteer training

Explore how volunteers are motivated to commit countless hours to a single project and what it takes to keep them. Learn the what, when, why, of recognizing volunteers for any organization. Call ACS to sign up for

volunteer training scheduled for Feb. 19 from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Rod and Gun Club

Building 8167, mil 485-6345

Valentine's Day

Come out to the Rod and Gun Club Feb. 14 and celebrate Valentines Day in style. "Duo Project" will perform. Specials, contests, prizes and more will be offered. Call the Rod and Gun Club for more information.

Sports and Fitness

Building 8743, mil 485-7003/7176

Cheer your unit

Come cheer for your unit to victory during the 222nd Base Support Battalion unit level basketball championships at the Hall of Champions Feb 10 – 13. Only the best unit will survive.

Sports shorts

Baumholder's Sports Office is looking for people interested in boxing. Training is Mondays through Thursdays from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Hall of Champions.

The Sports Office is also looking for coaches for community level soccer and volleyball action.

Be ready to shop

Baumholder American High School will host an Antiques and More Show on Feb. 8 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bring your ID and come ready to shop.

Outdoor Recreation

Building 8895, mil 485-7182

Let's go skiing

Baumholder Outdoor Recreation has several upcoming ski trips that are sure to fit your schedule. On Feb. 8 the center goes to Garmisch to ski the Zugspitz and Feb. 14 – 17, President's Day weekend, they head to Austria. Ski trips are open to all ski levels including non-skiers. Call Outdoor Recreation for more information.

Tune your board

Ski and snowboard services are available at Baumholder Outdoor Recreation. Same day service, in by 2 p.m. out by 6 p.m., is also available.

Learn to dive

Outdoor Recreation now offers introduction to scuba diving, scuba diving refresher courses, and SSI open water scuba diving courses. Call for course dates, times and fees.